



December 2007
Vol. 17
Issue 2

**Inside this
Issue:**

*Understanding
MRSA: Don't Get
Bitten by the Bug!*

*Copper's the New
Gold*

MHN/WISE

Congrats!

*Winter
Warnings*

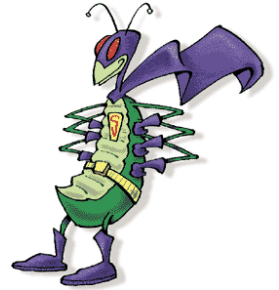
*Top 10 Site
Survey Items*

*NBSIA's New
Staff*

Calendar of Events

Don't Get Bitten by the Bug!

By: Jeff Wong, Prevention Services Analyst



The State of California Department of Public Health recently published an article titled "Skin Infections and MRSA Information for California Schools." The article advises students, faculty and staff at schools to be aware of the possibility of disease transmission including respiratory diseases (influenza, colds, tuberculosis) and diseases that are spread primarily through direct contact or contact with contaminated objects (such as lice and scabies). It also answers some of the common questions concerning methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and provides information on how to reduce the chance for exposure to MRSA.

Q) What is Staphylococcus aureus?

A) Staphylococcus aureus are bacteria that are most commonly carried in the noses of healthy people. Staph bacteria are one of the most common causes of skin infections in humans. Most of these skin infections are minor (such as boils and abscesses) and smaller infections can often be treated with incision and drainage without antibiotics. However staph also can cause serious infections such as pneumonia, bloodstream infections, and joint infections.

Q) What is methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)?

A) Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is Staphylococcus aureus that is resistant to all penicillins. Until recently, most MRSA infections occurred among hospitalized patients. However, for reasons unknown, more virulent strains of MRSA have emerged in the community, causing community-associated MRSA infections.

Q) What increases the risk for MRSA skin infections?

A) The following factors increase the risk of MRSA skin infections:

- Compromised skin (such as cuts or abrasions)
- Contact (frequent skin-to-skin)
- Contact with contaminated items and surfaces
- Crowding, and
- Difficulty keeping skin clean or not cleaning skin after a cut or abrasion.

The occurrence of an MRSA skin infection does not mean that the person is not clean or has been in an unhygienic environment. Some persons with no apparent risk factors for MRSA infection may come into contact with the bacteria at the same time that they have a small break in the skin and this can result in an infection in what appeared to be normal skin.

Q) How is MRSA spread?

A) MRSA spreads easily through direct contact with people or contact with MRSA contaminated surfaces or items. MRSA is spread more frequently in crowded areas such as locker rooms, dormitory rooms, or other crowded living conditions, particularly when skin-to-skin contact is likely. In school settings, there are many opportunities for skin-to-skin contact among students, especially those on athletic teams or in residential facilities. Most infections occur when staph that is already on the skin enters through a break in the skin (cut or scrape), or when broken skin is in contact with MRSA contaminated objects (such as shared athletic equipment, clothing, towels, or razors). Contaminated hands can also transfer MRSA to cuts or scrapes on the skin. Staph is not usually passed through the air.

Q) What can I do to reduce the spread of skin infections?

A) Hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is the single most important measure that can be taken to prevent the spread of skin infections. Hands should be clean before they touch the eyes, mouth, nose, or any cuts or scrapes on the skin. If hands are visibly soiled, they should be washed with soap and water.

MISSED SPOTS WHEN HAND-WASHING



Hand washing procedure:

1. Use warm water and wet hands and wrists;
2. Use a bar or liquid soap (antimicrobial soap is not necessary to remove MRSA);
3. Work soap into a lather and wash palms, back of hands up to wrists, between fingers, around thumbs, and under fingernails for at least 15 seconds;
4. Rinse well under warm, running water, and
5. Dry hands, using a disposable paper towel or hand-dryer.

Hand sanitizer procedure: Apply a dime sized amount of hand sanitizer to the palm of one hand; rub hands together covering all surfaces of hands and fingers until all hand sanitizer is absorbed. To be effective, hand sanitizers must be at least 60% alcohol and used on hands that are clear of visible dirt. If there is any visible dirt, hand sanitizers are not fully effective and hands should be washed with soap and water.

Q) When should hands be cleaned?

A) Hands should be cleaned under the following conditions:

- Whenever there is bare skin contact with others or with shared surfaces or equipment,
- After sneezing, coughing, blowing or touching nose,
- Before and after touching wounds, the mucous membranes of your eyes, nose, or mouth, or non-intact skin like acne, boils and skin rashes,

- After using the toilet or urinal, and,
- Before preparing food, eating, or drinking.

Q) How can infected persons minimize spreading MRSA to others?

A) Those infected with MRSA should follow these steps to minimize spreading the infection to others:

- Cover the wound. Keep wounds that are draining or have pus covered with clean, dry bandages. Drainage and pus from infected wounds can contain large amounts of bacteria, so keeping the infection covered will help prevent the spread of infection to others. Bandages or tape can be discarded with the regular trash.
- Clean hands. Anyone in close contact with infected person should clean their hands frequently with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after changing bandages or touching an infected wound.
- Do not share personal items. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or sports uniforms/equipment that may have had contact with the infected wound or bandage. Wash sheets, towels, and clothes, including sports uniforms that become soiled, with water and laundry detergent. Drying clothes in a hot dryer also helps kill bacteria.



Copper's the New Gold

By: Jeff Wong, Prevention Services Analyst

Copper theft has become a growing problem for school districts across California and throughout the nation. The member districts of North Bay Schools are no exception, with several schools recently being targeted by thieves. In one instance, criminals broke into several HVAC units at an elementary school, stripping all the copper wiring and tubing inside.

Police say that copper wiring, tubing, down spouts/gutters, and decorative items are being stolen and recycled for cash. Law enforcement has been trying to crack down on the problem by increasing the penalty for copper theft, however the problem continues. In one short period, losses in the Bay Area alone amounted to over \$100,000.

What can be done to minimize copper theft? This is a challenge for districts as it is nearly impossible to monitor and survey each school and operations facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Districts should recognize the risk and access each location for areas that may be vulnerable due to ease of access or large amounts of copper. Installation of cameras and surveillance recording equipment can protect District assets and deter criminal activity. Motion-sensitive lighting can also be installed as well lit areas in general are less prone to be targeted. Removal of view-blocking shrubs and trimming of trees is also recommended.

NBSIA is following this topic on the legislative front where there are proposals to increase the penalties for this theft both on the perpetrator and the salvage yards that exchange the copper for cash.

If you have any questions concerning copper theft prevention measures, please contact your local law enforcement agency or North Bay Schools Insurance Authority.

WELLNESS AND INSPIRATION FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES (W.I.S.E) Is Pleased to Announce the Expansion of Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

to include:

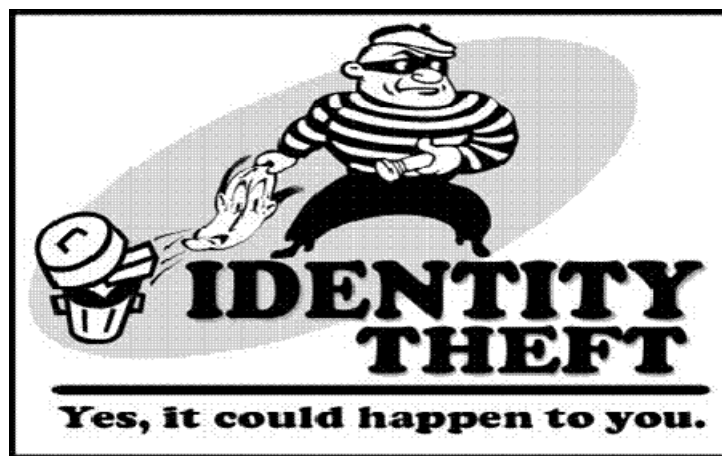
IDENTITY THEFT RECOVERY SERVICES

Information on ID theft prevention, plus an ID theft emergency response kit and help from a fraud resolution specialist if you are victimized.

For more information about your EAP program or to schedule an appointment please call: **(800) 227-1060**

Or visit: members.mhn.com

(access code: WISE)



NBSIA EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Congratulations are in order to Lily Chin, Worker's Compensation Claims Examiner, who recently passed the State of California's Self Insurance Exam! The California Self Insurance exam is a full day exam covering Workers' Compensation rules and regulations, permanent disability rating schedules, state reporting requirements, jurisdiction and all other aspects of the law. With this designation, Lily is now considered an Experienced Claims Examiner as defined by the California Department of Insurance. Lily's knowledge of claims, outstanding customer service skills, and motivation is a wonderful combination of strengths that will help keep the Comp Department moving forward.

Property & Liability

Winter Warnings

By: Gordon Templeton, Property & Liability Claims Manager

Winter soon will be upon us with weather conditions and other circumstances that create added hazards for exposure to loss. The following precautions are offered not only for school site/facility protection during the winter season, but also as a reminder to be extra vigilant for employee and student safety.

Maintenance Preparation

Perform a winter-ready check of buildings and grounds. Identify and remedy problems with heating/plumbing systems, fire protection systems, security/alarm notification systems, roofs (including drains, gutters, and drainspouts). Pay particular attention to areas that may be susceptible to freezing, such as entryways, hard-surface play areas, concealed spaces above suspended ceilings containing 'wet' pipes, and exposed roof plumbing.

Weather/Freeze

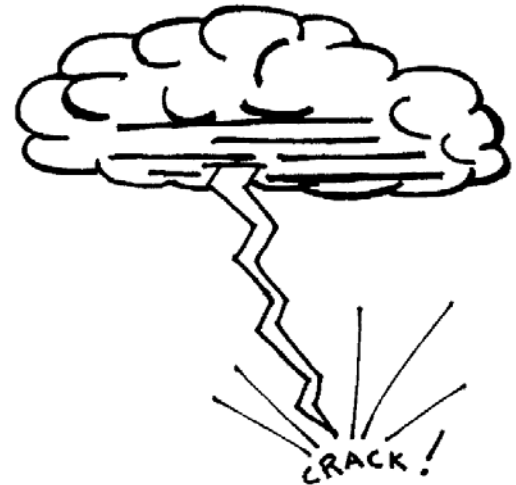
With winter arriving, the potential for damage due to freezing temperature increases. Last year, NBSIA member districts suffered some burst water pipe losses due to freezing. To help avoid such unfortunate, but largely preventable losses, special consideration should be given to sites/buildings that may be closed and heating turned off during holidays and breaks. Monitor building temperatures during freeze conditions and maintain a building temperature of at least 40 degrees during that time.

Weather/Flooding

Even for those member districts that do not usually experience flooding, there is still a need to plan for flooding, rain or water damage. All sites need inspection during severe or prolonged rainstorms. This requires night, weekend or holiday staff to do walk-throughs during severe weather. Don't wait until Monday morning or after the holiday or other break to discover damage. A good proactive planning measure is to make a map of drains in and around facilities. Often during and after flooding drains become clogged. Having such maps available can be very helpful to district maintenance staff and emergency crews. Plan for weather-related emergencies that could arise. Check and update sites telephone trees for emergency contacts. Take severe weather warnings seriously and act accordingly.

Playgrounds

Wet winter weather brings with it the potential for more slip and fall injuries both on play equipment and the surrounding blacktop and turf play areas. Wet playground equipment, either from rain or early morning dew, is a fairly common condition that can lead to slip and fall accidents. Playground supervisors must be vigilant.



Driving/Transportation

Review winter driving tips with all school personnel with driving responsibilities, particularly the importance of decreasing their speed during inclement weather. Remind students that extra precaution is needed during bad weather while waiting at bus stops, boarding busses, crossing streets, and driving to/from school.

Transportation/Traffic

School area vehicle traffic rules are always an issue, particularly so in the winter weather. These rules should be enforced. Double-parking, parking in red zones, intersections, driveway entrances and crosswalks are not only dangerous, but illegal.

Security

The traditional Holiday breaks create opportunities for increased school vandalism, malicious mischief and arson fires. Review and implement your site security procedures, identify and remedy areas in need. In short, a proactive approach to winter conditions will serve to reduce the frequency and/or severity of winter-time losses.

Attention High School and Jr. High School Principals

Please be mindful that parent Grad-night committees ARE NOT INSURED under the NBSIA Memorandum of Coverage issued to the liability coverage program member districts. (See the August '07 issue of News & Views).

You should require these and all 'auxiliary' groups to provide proof of liability insurance to the district, including an endorsement naming the district as an additional insured under the policy.

North Bay's Top Ten Site Survey Items

By: Jeff Wong, Prevention Services Analyst

North Bay's Top Ten Most Frequent School Safety Hazards

The list below represents the ten most frequently noted hazards seen in our member schools and office areas. Do you have any of these hazards at your site? Use this list to take a quick inventory and make some of these easy corrections now. Your staff and students (and NBSIA) will thank you!

10. Storage accumulating to the point it reaches the ceiling (may block fire sprinkler systems or pose a hazard from falling.)

CORRECTION: Remove items to maintain at least 18" clearance.
(CCR Title 8, 6170(c) (10))

9. Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) not available to product users.

CORRECTION: Maintain a current MSDS listing all products and chemicals so users can identify safety factors prior to use or in the event of a spill or injury.
(CCR, Title 8, Section 5194)

8. Secondary containers (spray bottles, etc.) not labeled.

CORRECTION: Label containers to identify contents. (CCR, Title 8, Section 5194)

7. Fire extinguishers not inspected monthly.

CORRECTION: Inspect fire extinguishers monthly and sign off tag. (CCR, Title 8, 6151(c))

6. Electrical panel blocked or covered up.

CORRECTION: Maintain clear access to electrical panel. (CCR, Title 8, Section 2340.16 (a))

5. Cabinets and furniture over 5' in height not earthquake braced.

CORRECTION: Brace cabinets and furniture to wall to prevent toppling.
(California Building Code 16A)

4. Power strips connected ("piggybacked") to one another.

CORRECTION: Only one power strip should be connected to each outlet.
(National Electric Code Article 400)

3. Power cords create trip or fall hazard.

CORRECTION: Tape down power cords to prevent trip or fall hazard.
(CCR, Title 8, Section 3273 (a))

2. Interior walls covered excessively with paper or other materials.

CORRECTION: Reduce covering to no more than 20% total wall area unless room is sprinklered.
(NFPA 101, Section 10.2.5.3.1)

AND THE NUMBER ONE ITEM IS.....

1. Poor housekeeping and excessive clutter in the room.

CORRECTION: Clean up clutter and maintain room in an orderly manner.
(CCR, Title 8, Section 3362 (a))



The goal of the North Bay Schools Prevention Services Department is to be responsive and assist you in maintaining a safe and healthy learning and service environment for your students and staff. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions and concerns.

Meet the New Staff...

At a Glance: Roni Baptista, Claims Examiner

Career Highlights: I am 54 years of age and over the years I have had many career highlights. However, at this time in my work life I remember more of the small things. Leaving at the end of a work week knowing that I finished what I set out to do that week or helping an injured worker through the workers' compensation system for the first time. Workers' compensation is a system that assists employees when they are injured on the job. When you can makes things go smoother for them during what is obviously a difficult time then it is very satisfying, that sounds corny but it is very true.

Hobbies: Guitar, Organ

Favorite Book: Many, I love to read.

Favorite Movie: They're all my favorite at the time that I watch them but a little known movie called Dream Team is one that always stands out.

What surprises people: Very little surprises people about me and that has been a life-long goal of mine. Be your own person all of the time. This works very well in the workers' compensation arena, no surprises.

At a Glance: Lyn Fortaleza, Account Technician

Career Highlights: Lyn joined the NBSIA team in July 2007 and has over 15 years of experience in accounting and as a realtor and mortgage loan officer. She is taking Maria Cantera's position since Maria's promotion to Data Analyst.

Hobbies: Watching movies, shopping, travel.

Favorite Book: When Tomorrow Comes (Sidney Sheldon)

Favorite Movie: Little Mermaid & Beauty and the Beast

What surprises people: Ballroom dancing

At a Glance: Jeff Wong, Prevention Services Analyst

Career Highlights: Jeff joined the NBSIA team in September 2007 and has over fifteen years of experience in the insurance industry. He has been a property and liability claims representative with a number of carriers including Safeco, Commerce West, and Travelers. Jeff also holds valid State of California Fire & Casualty and Life & Health Agent Licenses. He is a graduate of the University of Southern California with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Political Science and Social Science Communications.

Hobbies: Traveling, spectator sports.

Favorite Book: Time Magazine

Favorite Movie: The Great Escape-story of allied prisoners planning to escape from a German prisoner war camp.

What surprises people: Enjoys R&B and jazz music.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Location

December

12 Workshop: Excellence in the Workplace
 24-25 Christmas Holiday
 31 New Year's Eve

1535 Airport Road, Napa
NBSIA Office Closed
NBSIA Office Closed

January

1 New Year's Day
 9 Supervisor's Academy
 14-15 Annual Strategic Planning Session
 21 Dr. Martin Luther King Day
 22 Workshop: Critical Thinking
 24 Workshop: Hands-On Grammar & Punctuation
 24 Workshop: Writing Skills-The Nuts & Bolts of Workplace Communication

NBSIA Office Closed
 NBSIA Board Room
 Villagio Inn, Calistoga
NBSIA Office Closed
 675 Texas St., 1st Floor
 675 Texas St., 1st Floor
 675 Texas St., 1st Floor

February

10-13 Annual PARMA Risk Management Conference
 18 President's Day
 20 Executive Committee Meeting

Anaheim, CA
NBSIA Office Closed
 NBSIA Small Conf. Room



CONTACT US

Address: 380A Chadbourne Road
 Fairfield, CA 94534-9636
Web Site: www.nbsia.org
E-mail: (first name, last initial)@NBSIA.org

After Hours Emergency Pager: 428-0824, option 5
Automated Voice Mail: 428-0824 or 428-1830
WeTip Hotline 1-800-78-CRIME (27463)

General Administration:	707/428-1830	707/435-1181 (fax)
Janet DeGracia	Executive Director	Ext. 105
Suzanne Dillman	Program Services Manager	Ext. 106
Gordon Templeton	P/L Claims Manager	Ext. 103
Peggy Kech	Accounting Manager	Ext. 113
Lyn Fortaleza	Accounting Technician	Ext. 115
Maria Cantera	Data/Fiscal Analyst	Ext. 116
Martha Basurto	Administrative Assistant	Ext. 104
Heather Eichen	Office Assistant	Ext. 101

Prevention Services:	707/428-1830	707/428-1848 (fax)
Jeff Wong	Prevention Services Analyst	Ext. 126
Allison Spirlock	Prevention Services Coord.	Ext. 123

Workers' Compensation:	707/428-0824	707/428-1848 (fax)
Kami Linan	W/C Claims Manager	Ext. 110
Deborah DeMuyneck	Claims Examiner	Ext. 108
Roni Baptista	Claims Examiner	Ext. 111
Anna Socarras	Claims Assistant	Ext. 122
Lily Chin	Claims Examiner	Ext. 109
Shirley Steck	Claims Assistant	Ext. 112
Gwen Samuels	Claims Assistant	Ext. 107
Christine Trockey	Return to Work Coord.	Ext. 121